

Rocky Hill Municipal Well Superfund Site
Background Summary 3/98

The Rocky Hill Municipal Well (RHMW) and Montgomery Township Housing Development (MTHD) Sites (Sites) are located in Somerset County, New Jersey in the vicinity of the intersection of U.S. Route 206 and N.J. Route 518.

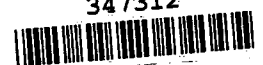
The RHMW covers 2 acres in the southern part of Somerset County and consist of two wells that were constructed in 1936 to supply the resident of the Borough of Rocky Hill with a source of drinking water. Well number 1 was abandoned and sealed between 1976 and 1978. In 1978, a study by Rutgers University on the RHMW revealed trichloroethylene (TCE) contamination levels of about 25 parts per billion (ppb). Due to elevated levels of TCE in the water, well number 2 was closed in November 1979. Levels of TCE in the well water eventually declined, and the well was subsequently reopened. Levels of TCE, however, increased, and the wells was closed for a second time in January 1982. During the shutdown of well number 2, the Borough of Rocky Hill obtained water from the Elizabethtown Water Company. After the installation of two air stripping units by the borough for well number 2, the well reopened as a potable source of water in July 1983.

Concern over the groundwater contamination in Rocky Hill spurred the initial sampling of private wells in Montgomery Township from December 1979 to January 1980. TCE contamination was found in private wells. In March 1981, Elizabethtown Water Company water lines were installed in MTHD and residents were advised not to use well water. Initially 20 homes elected to hook up to public supply. By 1987, 38 homes had hooked up. A September 1987 Record of Decision (ROD) provided for the supply of alternate water through the permanent hookup of all MTHD residences and 6 residences outside of MTHD to the available public water supply system. At the present time, 74 residences have been hooked up to public water supply.

Due to the proximity and the similarity of contaminants present, a decision was made to address the Rocky Hill Municipal Well and Montgomery Township Housing Development Sites jointly.

The remedy chosen for the Sites in the 1988 ROD includes

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extraction of contaminated groundwater from the primary source area; treatment to Federal and State cleanup standards using an air stripper; and reinjection of treated water into the underlying aquifer.

Remedial Design activities in the vicinity of RHMW revealed TCE contamination previously unknown in groundwater sampled at monitoring wells MW-20S and MW-20D (constructed in 1992). TCE concentrations in these wells was 310 ppb and 62 ppb, respectively. Following this discovery, investigations were conducted at the former Fifth Dimension facility by Potentially Responsible Parties (PRPs) for the Sites. The former Fifth Dimension facility is a property designated at Block 35001, Lot 11 on the Montgomery Township tax map and is located on the east side of Route 206 and is southwest of the Rocky Hill Municipal Well. TCE is believed to have been used in past operations at the facility. A PRP investigation at the former Fifth Dimension facility during 1995 revealed Volatile Organic Compound (VOC) contamination in groundwater and soil. TCE concentrations in shallow monitoring wells ranged from non-detect to 130 ppb. TCE concentrations in soil ranged from non-detect to 617 ppb.

The purpose of this field investigation is to determine the vertical and horizontal of TCE contamination in the groundwater and soil in the vicinity of the former Fifth Dimension facility.